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**Natural Resources, Ecology &  
Parks Committee**

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**HB 1611**

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington invasive species council.

**Sponsors:** Representatives B. Sullivan, Upthegrove, Williams, Chase, Dickerson, Linville and McDermott.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a council of state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental entities to coordinate the management of harmful invasive species.
- Creates a new non-appropriated account in the state treasury.

**Hearing Date:** 2/8/05

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

Invasive species are generally considered to be animal or plant species that are thriving in a geographical area to which they are not native. The state of Washington has a number of programs to manage invasive species. Many of these programs are tailored for a specific purpose. For instance, there are programs designed to manage invasive upland plant species such as wild chervil, aquatic species such as spartina and purple loosestrife, as well as aquatic animal species such as zebra mussels. The programs are generally run by the state agency with expertise in the environment or industry in which the invasive species operates or the pathway through which future invasive species could arrive.

**Summary of Bill:**

Creation of the Washington Invasive Species Council

The Washington Invasive Species Council (council) is created within the Office of the Governor to provide policy level direction, planning, and coordination for combating invasive species. For the purposes of the council's scope, invasive species includes non-native organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state. The charge to the council is to foster communication and coordination, not to alter the existing statutory authorities for invasive species management.

### Council composition

The council can initially be composed of between 31 and 55 members. Members of the council can increase that number with a consensus of the membership. Some representation on the council is mandatory, while other participants must only be invited to attend.

The mandatory participants include the representatives of 16 state entities. These include the departments of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Transportation, along with other entities such as the Puget Sound Action Team, the State Patrol, the Biodiversity Council, and the Pesticide Advisory Board. In addition to these 16 members, the Governor is also required to appoint 15 members from non-governmental organizations. These organizations include the agricultural industry, wildlife interests, the pet industry, the shipping industry, the shellfish industry, and environmental conservation interests.

An additional 24 members must be invited to participate, but their inclusion is voluntary. This includes representatives of 18 different Federal agencies, two members representing tribal interests, and four local government representatives.

### Council goals

The council has specific goals. These goals include:

- Providing a forum for identifying and understanding invasive species issues;
- Facilitating the communication and cooperation of everyone involved;
- Coordinating a system for early detection and eradication of new species;
- Providing an avenue for public outreach; and
- Prioritizing invasive species control action.

In addition, the council must prepare a strategic plan for addressing invasive species issues. This plan must identify gaps in the current statutory authorities of the various state entities, and the state entities must implement the plan when they do have the necessary authority.

In addition, the council must select at least one project each year from the strategic plan. This project will be the focus of coordinated action by the council's member entities.

### New account

The new non-appropriated Washington Invasive Species Council Account is created. The account will receive any appropriations, gifts, grants, or donations that the council may be given. Money in the account may only be used for grants and loans.

### Reports to the Legislature

In addition to developing recommendations for new legislation, the council is required to submit an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor. The report is to describe the progress made towards implementing the strategic plan.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.